

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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SAM-01 OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 PA-01 PRS-01

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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8906

INFO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

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E.XO. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, CH

SUBJ: PRC COAL PRODUCTION IN 1975

1. PRC COAL PRODUCTION IN 1975 REVERSED ITS DOWNWARD GROWTH TREND OF RECENT YEARS PROBABLY ACHIEVING AN OVERALL INCREASE OF 11-12 PERCENT OVER 1974'S POOR RECORD. BASED ON 1974 PRODUCTION OF 390 MILLION TONS, OUTPUT IN 1975 APPEARS TO HAVE REACHED THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF 425-435 MILLION TONS.

2. PROVINCIAL CLAIMS OF PREFULFILLMENT OF 1975 COAL PLANS, ACCOMPANIED IN MANY CASES BY PERCENTAGE INCREASES OVER 1974, HAVE APPEARED FOR 17 OUT OF 29 PROVINCIAL UNITS, ACCOUNTING FOR ABOUT 75 PERCENT OF NATIONAL PRODUCTION. THE CLAIMS COVER ALL THE MAJOR PRODUCERS, EXCEPT LIAONING. (LIAONING, WHICH SUFFERED A EARTHQUAKE IN FEBRUARY, ANNOUNCED A 5.4 PERCENT INCREASE AT MIDYEAR OVER THE FIRST HALF OF 1974.)

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3. SOME OF THE LARGER PERCENTAGE INCREASES, FOR EXAMPLE

ANHWEI'S 32 PERCENT, OBVIOUSLY REFLECT DIFFICULTIES IN 1974. NEVERTHELESS, THE RECORD OF PLAN FULFILLMENT IS SUBSTANTIAL AND BEARS OUT THE FAVORABLE TREND APPARENT IN AN EARLIER PRC ANNOUNCEMENT OF OVERFULFILLMENT OF THE NATIONAL PLAN BY 6.2 PERCENT FOR THE FIRST 10 MONTHS (ER 25, 1975 HK 14674).

4. A WEIGHTED AVERAGE OF THE 17 PROVINCES (ASSUMING A 10 PERCENT INCREASE FOR 5 PROVINCES THAT PREFULFILLED PLANS BUT DID NOT GIVE PERCENTAGE INCREASES AND SOME GROWTH - 3 TO 4 PERCENT - FOR 12 NON-ANNOUNCERS) SUGGESTS A PRODUCTION RISE OF 11-12 PERCENT.

5. OTHER DATA FOR SHANSI PROVINCE (PEKING NCNA DOMESTIC JANUARY 16, 1975) ALLOWS A FAIRLY ACCURATE FIX ON ITS 1975 OUTPUT OF A LITTLE OVER 70 MILLION TONS. ASSUMING IT CONTINUED TO ACCOUNT FOR AROUND ONE-SIXTH OF NATIONAL OUTPUT IN 1975 (NCNA DECEMBER 24, 1974), A NATIONAL FIGURE OF ABOUT 425 MILLION TONS CAN BE DERIVED.

6. COMMENT: IN THE ABSENCE OF ACCURATE STATISTICS, THE ABOVE PRODUCTION FIGURES ARE NECESSARILY IMPRECISE, PARTICULARLY SINCE PROVINCIAL MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENTS UNDOUBTEDLY INVOLVE ROUNDING. NEVERTHELESS, OVERALL OUTPUT OF A 425-435 MILLION TON MAGNITUDE APPEARS TO BE A REASONABLE ESTIMATE FOR 1975.
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